

"Look at Section D, cooperate in locating, eradicating, and destroying wild or illicit growth of plant species from which controlled substances may be extracted". So we have told them in the law and we have been telling them in the law for years to spend their time going out and eliminating marijuana weeds out in the fields. Well if we wanted to spend our state money on that we could bankrupt the entire state just trying to eliminate all the marijuana weeds. It is an impossible task. But when you have something like, I think, approximately 4,000 "narcotic or drug arrests" last year, and well over 90 percent of them had to do with the misdemeanor marijuana arrests in which they fine them \$50 or gave them no fine at all, you can see our money, your money, the taxpayers money is being dissipated, not used to really hit where it can hurt organized crime. I'll give you an example, the best example in the world I think in this area. When California gave their Patrol the directive, through legislation, to start concentrating on hard drugs they discovered two things--they dramatically increased their arrests and convictions of the hard drugs, the heroin, the amphetamines, the big drug dealers, dramatically increased them. I'll be giving you an article and a report on that within the next couple of weeks, and they learned that they didn't make any significant increase in the number of marijuana users. They started hurting organized crime and hard drugs where it hurt because that is where a lot more of their efforts were going. So I think the amendment is important.

PRESIDENT: Senator Schmit.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President, members of the Legislature. I could have answered a number of the questions that were raised by Senator Stoney and several of the other senators as they spoke here this morning. I believe it is an important amendment. I believe it is important to this Legislature's set policy. I agree with Senator Chambers that it should not be left to the discretion of law enforcement as to what the priorities would be. It has been pointed out many times, in the discussions we've had on this in the last six years, that if we are going to eliminate the traffic in hard drugs you're going to have to nail down the major pushers and not worry so much, perhaps, about chasing kids up and down the streets of the small towns or cities of the State of Nebraska. As Senator DeCamp has pointed out, there is broad authority and responsibility in the bill. The responsibility is there because it is an important part of the total concept of the control of drug abuse. We recognize, and this Legislature recognizes, and those of us who have been here for a number of years know how difficult it is to have secured the necessary appropriation to stamp out these drugs. We have given the Highway Patrol some money, we have given them some additional people, we have given them some additional responsibility, but there is no doubt in my mind but that we have not granted them sufficient resources to stamp out the drugs per se. Then the question arises as to how shall they proceed. It is the responsibility of this Legislature to say to the Patrol "You shall proceed in this manner, as outlined in this amendment. You shall first proceed in those areas where the drugs are the most damaging to the individual". That is common sense you say. That's right, it is common sense, but frequently common sense does not carry over into agencies. We have had the Patrol come before the Committee time after time, after time, after time in the last several years, unable to explain why they did certain things. We recognize that they are the top law enforcement agency, they are a top quality outfit,